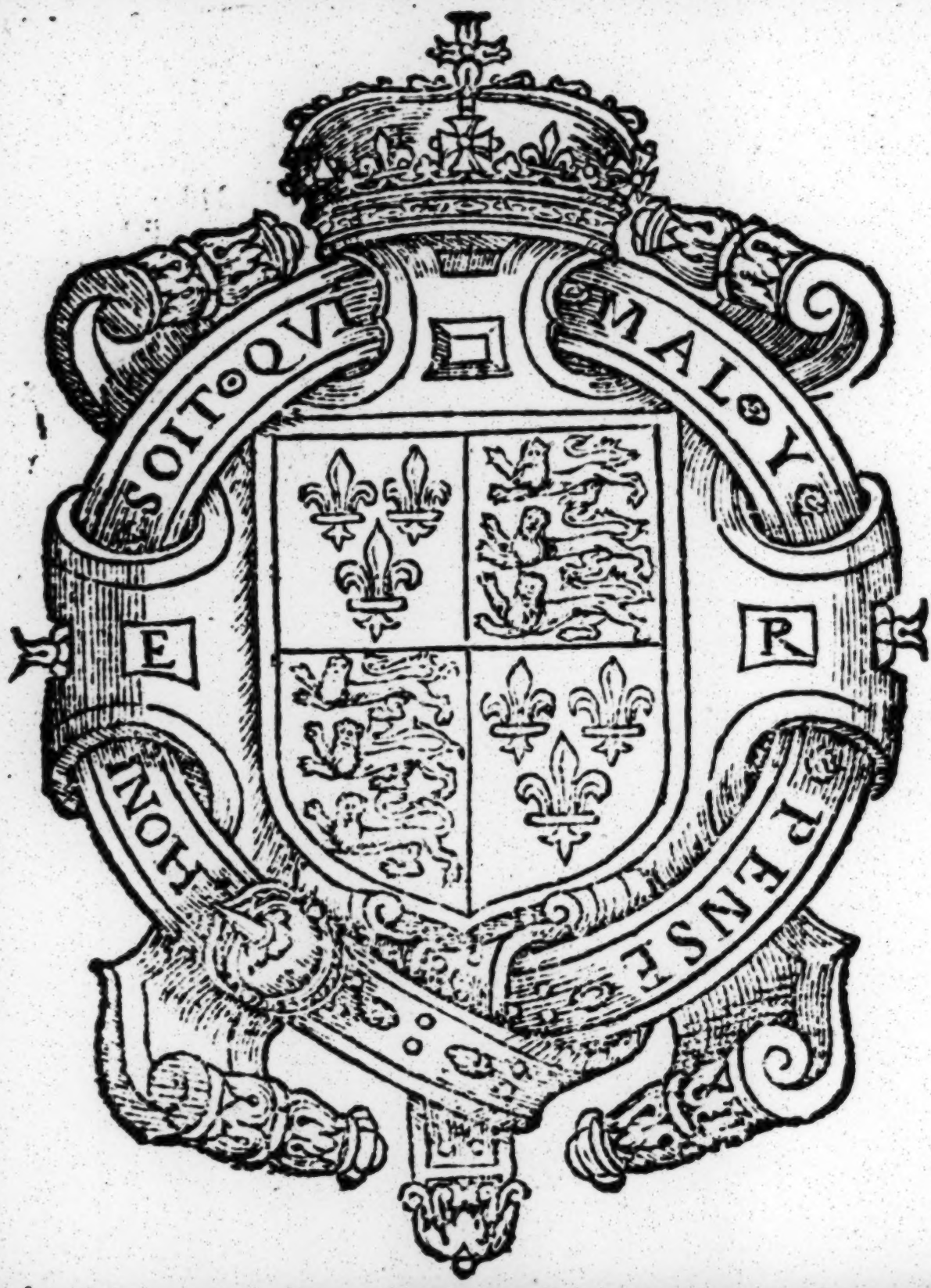
A Godly Meditation of the Soule, concerning a Loue towardes Christ, *our Lorde*, *aptlye translated* out of French into Englishe by the right highe, and moste vertuous Princesse Elizabeth, by the grace of God, of England, Fraunce and Ireland, Queene. &c. Whervnto is added godlye Meditations, set forth after the Alphabet of the Queenes Maiesties name.

PROVERBES. 14.

A wyse Woman vpholdeth hir housholde, and who so feareth the Lord, walketh in the right path.


SOIT QVI MAL Y
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PENSE

¶ To the most excellent and vertuous Princesse, and our gracious Soueraigne Lady Elizabeth, *by the grace of GOD, of* Englande, Fraunce, and Irelande, Queene, defender of the christian fayth. &c. Your Maiesties most faithfull, and obedient seruaunt, Iames Canceller, wysheth long lyfe, with accomplishment of all your most godly desires.

BIBLIOTHECA BODLEIANA

IT IS TO BE CONsidered most gracious Queene, the great nũber of noble women, which in this our time are now not onely giuen to the studie of humane Sciences, and of straunge tongues: but also are able to compare as well in endyting of godly and fruitfull Treatises, as also in translating out of Latine, Greeke, Italian,

and French, good and godly bookes, to the great profite and commoditie of such as are ignoraunt in the sayde tongues: whose actes for their wit, learning, and eloquence, are worthy perpetuall fame and memorie. The learning of Susan is celebrated of the Prophet Daniel, shee was not ignoraunt of the law of Moyses, as ryght well is vnderstande by hir chaste and vertuous lyfe. So thorowlye were the foure daughters of Philippe instructed in the sacred woorde of God: that they were all well able, as Luke testifyeth, exactly to interprete and expounde the holy Scriptures.

Daniel.13.

Actes.21.

Yea, such was the learning and singularitie of Loyes and Eunice, the Mother and Grandmother of Timothe the Bysshop: that not onely the sacred Scriptures haue them in reuerence, as well it appeareth by the penne of Paule, but also after them all ages for euer.

2.Timoth.1.

The famous and learned father Saint Hierome, wryting in the prayse of vertuous and learned women, doth highly commend, Eustochium and Paula hir daughter, and Blasilla the daughter of Paula, of which euery one, sayth hee, was passing well seene in the

Latine,

Latine, Greeke, and Hebrue. He giueth the lyke testimonie of Marcella, a very notable woman in Rome, whome he doth commend also to be notable and famous in the holye Scriptures. Howe happie then is that countrie and people, for whose behoofe and edifying, Queenes and Princes spare not, ne ceasse not, with all earnest indeuour and sedulitie to spende their tyme, their wits, their substaunce, and also their bodyes in the studies of noble Sciences? And in this part, most gracious Lady, your excellent Maiesty, like as your learning and vertues are most worthie, so your Maiesties deserts require to haue, for your great studie, paine, and trauayle in your yong and tender yeares, condigne prayse in translating out of Frenche into English, this booke, entytuled the Meditation of a Christen soule: Composed first in Frenche, by the vertuous Ladie Margaret Queene of Nauerre.

In the which woorke your Maiestie no lesse haue shewed your selfe to be (in your tender and Maydenly yeares) expertly learned in the Latin tongue, than in the Greeke, Italian, and Frenche. In the which foure tongues your hyghnesse, moste gracious

Queene, hath exactly set forth to the comfort of the famous learned of your realme, in the beginning of the sayde Booke, goodly sentences out of the thirtene Psalme of the Prophete Dauid, in the sayde tongues: So liuelye Apothegmes, or quicke sentences, respecting Christianitie, haue seldome come from women. Yet I doe not denye but many excellent women haue vttered matter of wysedome wonderfull: concerning morrall vertues: but this most highly respecteth the kingdome of fayth, and Regiment of the soule, which Iesus Christ the eternall sonne of God, from Heauen by his doctrine and death so busily sought to clere. O how greatlye maye wee all glorie in such a peerelesse floure of Virginitie, as is your grace, who in the middest of Courtly delices, and amidles the inticement of worldlye vanities, haue by your owne choyse and election, so vertuoutlye and fruitfullye translated this vertuous worke in your childhood and tender youth. O royall exercise in deede of virginly education: O right precious fruite of Maydenlye studies, worthie immortalitie of fame and renowne: For what coulde be a more manifest argument of minding the wealth of

the

the Soule, than so effectually to prosecute the translation of this godly worke.

This precious Pearle of your trauayle (most gracious and Soueraigne Lady) long hath lyen hidden from the sight of your louing subiects: and nowe come to the handes of your faythfull obedient seruaunt, and dayly Orator, and the corruption & faultes of the olde print corrected and amended: is now by him (for the worthinesse thereof) dedicated to your Maiestie, as to the verie Patroneſſe and Author of the same. Whereunto most gracious Ladye, your humble Orator, hath added certayne vertuous and godly Meditations, collected and gathered out of the holy Scriptures: orderly set forth after the Alphabet of your Maiesties name. Minding also most gracious Ladie, vnder your gracious fauour, further to enlarge the same with godly Psalmes and prayers, to the comfort of the godly Reader of the same: craueing your gracious pardon, that so boldlye (being so vnworthy of my selfe, woulde take in hande to present to your Maiestie (so simple as I am) so precious a Iewell.

Yet most gracious Ladie, remembring the vnspeakeable gentleneſſe of Artaxerxes

king

king of Persia, in receyuing a cup of water of his poore subiect, I was in my selfe perswaded that your highnesse of your clemencie and goodnesse, woulde accept this my good will and intent. For who hath not cause to take example of your notable and vertuous acte? Who hath not cause and occasion, setting before him your paine and trauayle, to shake of all sluggishnesse, and to yeelde to his countrie some condigne fruite of his studie? To what persons (be they neuer so ignoraunt or vnlearned) may not this most earnest zeale of a most mightie Princesse of high estate, be an effectuall prouocation and encouraging to haue good minde and will to reade, heare, and embrace this deuout and fruitfull Meditation, so playnely and sensibly translated, and so graciously e by your highnesse offered. And (as ye woulde say) put in all folkes handes, to be made familier vnto them?

Wherefore, I beseeche Almightie GOD that it may (in the hartes of the readers thereof) take no lesse place and effect, of godly knowledge, and innocent liuing, than by your Grace was ment in the trãslating of the same: whose act, most noble and gracious

Princesse,

Princesse, hath deserued in this worlde, condigne fame and renowne, with perpetuall memorie, & after this life a crowne of immortall glorie and blede in Heauen, eternally there to raigne with Christ our Lorde, and Sauiour. Amen.

Your Maiesties humble seruaunt, and dayly Orator, Iames Canceller.

¶ The Preface to the gentle Reader.

CERTAINE and sure it is, most gentle Reader, that all they which shall peruse thys godlye worke, perhappes shall not therewith be pleased. For among sundry feeders are alwayes diuers appetites, and in great assemblies of people, dissonant and varyable iudgements. Neyther fine painted speech, eloquēt termes, or wysedome of thys worlde (which for priuate gayne and commodity many men seeketh) are herein to be looked for: and why, he that is here familiarlye commoned wythall, regardeth no curiousitie, but playnesse and truth.

He

He refuſeth no ſinner, but is at all tymes well contented to heare hys humble tale. Hide not thy ſelfe from me (ſayth he) when thou haſt done amiſſe, but come boldly to mee and open thy cauſe, and I will heare thee. If thy ſinnes be ſo redde as the Scarlet, I ſhall make them whyter than Snow. And though thy factes be as the Purple, yet ſhall they appeare as whyte as the Wool. For as truely as I lyue (ſayeth the Lorde) I haue no pleaſure in the death of a ſinner, but rather will that he conuert and lyue. Ezech. 33.

If therefore, gentle Reader, the homely ſpeech hereof do ſome thing offende thee, conſider it to bee the worke of a woman, and yet of none other woman, than was both godly minded, and borne of Noble parentage. Lady Margaret Queene of Nauarre.

Marke well I praye thee, the Prophete Dauid in the Psalmes, which was a man both wyse and learned, and ye shall finde his maner in speaking not like vnto the fine Orators. For, as S. Paule sayeth: Fayth standeth not in flourishing eloquence, neither yet in mans pointed wisdome but in the grace and power of God. 2.Cor.2.

Therfore the oft repeting of some one sentence, engendreth to thee a tedious wearynesse: marke then I praye thee, the Gospell and canonicall Epistles of S. Iohn, and I doubt not but thou shalt find there the like phrase and maner of speech.

This good and vertuous Lady, being right skilfull in the Sacred Scriptures, following the example of Saint Iohn (being raptor inwardly drawne into a zealous desire and contem-

pla-

plation of mynde) to ſearche out the benefite of the great loue and mercy of God towarde the ſoule of man, which is hys creature, and the reward of his iuſtice prepared for the vnfaythfull, asketh thys queſtion: what is the heart of man concerning his owne ſtrength, before he hath receyued the gift of fayth, nothing but ſinne.

For as S. Paule ſaith, fayth is a lyuely and ſtedfaſt truſt in the fauour of God, & worketh in vs a perfit knowledge of the goodneſſe, wiſedome, and power of God: by faith the ſoule is filled with a perfite loue in him, by force whereof, is excluded from it all fleſhly feare. By fayth, the ſoule worketh the will of the Eternall father. Rom.5. Rom.6.

By faith, it is brought forward and promoted, into the heauenly kindred.

By

By fayth, it is become the deare brother, ſiſter, and mother of Chriſt: A Citizen of Heauen with the Apoſtles and Prophets: Yea, the child of adoption, and heire togither with Chriſt in the heauenly inheritaunce.

Math.12.

Rom.3.

What ſhall I neede here more to ſay, but onely to deſire of thee (gentle reader) paciently to perуſe this work, which is but ſmall in quantitie, yet ful of godly and ſpirituall matter, verye comfortable for the ſoule. The fruite wherof, thy heart taſting, it may be inflamed in the loue of Chriſt our eternall ſpouſe, as this preſent Booke teacheth thee. Amen.

¶ Certayne Sentences out of the xiij. Pſalme, written by the Queenes Maieſtie, in Latine, French, and Italian.

Latine.

Stultus dixit in corde ſuo : non eſt Deus. Illi corrupti ſunt, & abhominabiles in ſua impietate, nullus eſt qui aliquid boni facit.

French.

Le fol dit en ſon cœur, il n'y a point de Dieu. Ils ſont corrompus & abominables, en leur impietè, il n'y a nul qui face aucun bien.

Italian.

Lo ſtolto diſſe ne'l ſuo cuore, Egli non vi è Dio. Eſſi ſon corrotti & abominevoli ne la lor'impietà : Non vi è neſſuno che faccia alcun bene.

¶ A godly Meditation of the inwarde loue of the Soule.

Where is the hell, full of traucyle, payn, mischefe, and torment? where is the pit of cursednesse, out of which doth spring all desperatiõ? Is there anye hell so profounde, that is sufficient to punishe the tenth part of my sinnes, which in number are so manye, that the infinite swarme of them, so shadoweth my darckened sences, that I cannot account them, neyther yet well see them? And I so farre am entred among them, that I haue

no power to obtayne the true knowledge of the deepe daungers of them. I perfitely feele also, that the roote of sinne is so grafted in me, that in my selfe I finde none other effect, but all is, eyther braunch, leafe, or fruite, for it bringeth forth in mee. And if I looke for better, a braunch thereof shadoweth mine eyes, & in my mouth doth fall when I woulde speake, the bitter fruit of cursed sinne. If my spirit be stirred to harken, then the noyse of hir leaues stoppeth mine eares, and filleth my nostrils with the smell of hir flowers. Beholde now therefore howe in paynes my soule, a slaue, and prysoner without light, or comfort, lyeth crying and weeping, hauing hyr

Roma. 7.

sorte

feéte bounde with the chayne of concupiſcence, and hir armes faſt tyed thorow euill vſe. Who then hath power to helpe or remedie it? not I. Neyther haue I power to cry for ſuccour. And as I can perceyue there is no helpe of hope for meé, but by the ſpeciall grace of God, which of my ſelfe I can not deſerue, but by Chriſt his onelye Sonne, whoſe brightneſſe giueth light to my darckeneſſe, whoſe power examining my fault, breaketh the vayle of ignorance, and giueth me cleare vnderſtanding, what thing abydeth in me, where I am, and wherefore I labour. Rom. 5. Iohn. 1. Iohn. 12.

He it is whome I haue offended. He it is to whome I dyd obey ſo ſeldome: wherefore it is con-

uenient that my pryde be suppres-
sed, with weping hart and sorow-
full sighes. I humbly therefore
confesse that I am much lesse thā
nothing. Before my birth, myre,
ashes a dunghill, hauing a bodye
prompt to all euill, not willing o-
ther studie, subiect to care, sorow,
Iob.14. and payne, short of lyfe, the ende
vncertayne, & vnder sinne by A-
dam solde, and by the lawe con-
demned. For of my selfe I neuer
had yet the power to obserue one
onely commaundement of God, the
force of sinne, was such in mee, &
therefore is my sinne no whit the
lesse to be hidden, and the more I
cloaked and dissembled my sinne
outwardlye, the more it encreased
within my heart. For what God
would,

would, that coulde I not will, and what he woulde not, I oft tymes desired to perfoꝛme, which thing, doth constrayne me by impoꝛtable soꝛrow, in this weary, and raging lyfe, to wish the ende of this miserable body thoꝛow a desired death.

Who shall he then be, that shall deliuer oꝛ reconer anye good foꝛ mée? Alas, it can be no moꝛtall man: foꝛ his power and strength is not such as can delyuer mée. Who then? The onelye grace of the almightie God, who neuer is slacke to helpe the penitent wyth his mercie. O what a mayster is that, which without deseruing, will shew his mercie on sinners? I serued him slothfully, and without cealing offended hym euerye Roma. 7.

day, yet is he not slacke in helping mee.

He doth see the euil, that I haue, what, and howe much it is, and that I of my selfe can doe nothing that is good., but with heart and bodie so inclyned I am to the contrarie, that I feele no strength in me, vnlesse it be to doe euill. Yet doth he not tarie, till I humblye praye him, or that seeing my hell, and damnation, I doe crye vppon him. But his spirite whoozling in my hart, greater than I can declare, asketh for me a gift, whereof the vertue is vnknowne to my little power.

Psal. 37.

And this the same vnknowne gift, or whoozling in my hart, doth bring me a new desire, shewing the good,

good, that I haue lost by my sinne, and giuen mee againe through his grace and bountie, that which hath ouercome all sinne.

O my Lorde, what grace and goodnesse is this, which doth put out so many sinnes? Now may I see that thou art full of all godly loue, to make mée of a sinner, thy seruant and childe. Alas my God, I did not seéke thée, but fled and ranne awaye from thée, and here beneath, thou camest downe to me, which am nothing but a worm of the earth all naked. What doe I say? A worme? Naye, worse than a worme, full of pryde, deceyte, malice, and treason. The promise which my friendes made, when I was baptised, is such, that

I

Collo.3. I alwayes through fayth in thy paſſion, ſhould feele the mortifica-
tion of my fleſh, and dwell alwayes
with thée in the croſſe, where thou
waſt faſt nayled, as I beléeue, and
yéelded death deade. as I alſo
ſhoulde yéelde all ſinne.

Thus haue I oftentymes vn-
tyed, taken downe, & ſet at large,
I haue broken, denyed, and falſi-
fied my promiſe, and through pride
I haue liſted vp my will in ſuch
maner, that through ſloth, my due-
tie towardes thée was forgotten,
and, that much more is, as well
the profite or value, which I had
Math.16. of thée in the daye of my baptiſme,
as alſo thy ſauing loue and promi-
ſes following, I haue all alyke
neglected: what ſhal I ſay more?

Albeit

Meditation.

Albeit that oftentymes thou perceyuing me wretched, and vnhappie, hast giuen mée so many warnings in fayth, and in sacraments, admonishing mée by preachinges, and comforting mée by the receyuing of thy blessed bodie & sacred bloude, promising by the same to put me in the number of them that now are adorned with perfite innocencie: yet haue I all these high benefites, throwne into forgetfulnesse. Iohn.6. Math.26.

Oftentymes, O Lorde, haue I with thée broken couenant. And partly for that my poore soule was to much fed with the euil bread of damnable doctrine of hypocrites. I despised such succor and ghostlye Phisicke in Gods worde, as Ieremi.7.

woulde haue helped me, if I had bene willing to looke for it: yet knewe I at that tyme no teacher conuenient. For there is neyther man, saint, nor Aungell, that can without thy spirite, chaunge the heart of a sinner. Alas, good Iesus, thou beholding my blindnesse, and that at my nede I could haue no succour of men, didst open the way of my saluation. O how great is thy goodnesse, and howe inestimable the sweetnesse which thou hast shewed therein? Is there any father so naturall to the daughter, or brother to the sister, which woulde euer haue done as thou hast done? For thou camest down into hell to succor my soule, where against thy will she was, in tēding

Psalm.118.

to

to haue perished, bycause thée dyd not loue.

Alas, swéete Lorde, thou hast loued hir, yea, euen to the verie outshedding of thy most precious bloude. O charitie feruent and incomparable. Nothing slacke art thou in loue, that so loudst euery sinner, yea, and also thine enimies, not onely in forgiuing their offences, but also in giuing thy selfe for their saluation, libertie, and deliueraunce, to the death, crosse, trauayle, payne, and sufferaunce. When I cast in mind what should be the occasiō of thy loue towards méé, I can séé nothing else but a loue wonderfull, which moueth thée to giue me, that I cannot deserue. Then as farre forth as I can

1. Iohn. 3.

Iohn. 5.

can sée, I ought to giue no thanks for my saluation, but only to thée my Lorde Iesu, to whome I owe the prayse therof, as to him, which is my sauiour and creator. What a thing is it that thou hast done so much for me? Thou art not onely contented to haue forgiuen me my sinnes, but also hast giuen vnto méé, the ryght fortunate gyfte of grace.

Ephe.3.

For it shoulde suffice méé, I comming out of such a daunger, to be lyke a straunger vsed. But thou doest handle my soule, if I durst so say it, as a mother, daughter, sister, and wyfe: Notwythstanding my Lord, I am the trespasser, which am not worthie to come neare the dore of thy ryght high

high place, to aske heade where thy dwelling is. O what grace is this, that so sodainly thou vouchsafest to drawe my soule into such highnesse, that she feeleth hyr selfe ruler of my bodie. She poore, ignorannt, and lame, doth finde hyr selfe with the rich, wise, & strong, bycause thou hast written in hyr heart, the roote of thy spirite, and holy worde, gyuing hir true fayth to receyue it, which thing made hir to conceyue thy sonne, in beleéuing him to be man, God sauiour, & also the true forgiuer of sinnes. Therefore doest thou assure hir, that she is mother to thy sonne, of whom thou art the onely father. Rom. 8. Math. 12.

And furthermore, O my father, here is a great loue of thy

well

well doing, that thy holye Sonne hath taken on him the bodye of a man, and hath mingled himselfe with our ashes, which thing wée maye not vnderstande without a most true fayth. It hath pleased thée also to put him so neare vs,

Philip.2. that he did ioyne himselfe to our flesthe, and I séeing him to be called man, am bolde to call him brother. Now sith my soule may saye of hir selfe, that she is the sister of G O D, ought she not to haue hir selfe assured in him? yes truely. For thou doest declare with great

Gene.1. loue, that hir creation was onely of thy good will, which it pleaseth thée alwayes to haue towards hir, giuing assuraunce that before hyr first day, or tyme of being, prouided

ded for hir, thou thorowe loue hast made hir, as thou of power alone canst well doe it, and also diddest put hir within this bodie, not for to slack with slouth, but that both of them shoulde haue none other exercise, but only to thinke howe to doe some seruice vnto thée.

Then this truth maketh hir to feele that there is in thée true paternitie. O what honour, what sweétnesse, and what glorie hath the soule, which doth alwayes remember, that she is thy daughter, and that in calling thée father, she doth thy commaundement? What is there more? Is that all? No, it doth please thée to giue hir another name, to call hir thy wyfe, and that shée againe doe call thée husbaude,

bande, declaring therby how thou hast freely manifested the mariage of hir. By baptisme hast thou made a promyse to giue hir thy goodes and riches, and to take on thee hyr sinnes. For shee hath nothing by heritage but sinne of hyr first father Adam. All hir treasures that she hath of nature, are nothing else but sinnes, which thou hast tyed vppon thy Crosse, and payde all hir debtes with thy goodes and landes.

Collo. 2.

Thou hast made hyr so ryche, and with so great a ioynter endued hir, that shee knowing hir selfe to be thy wedded wyfe, doeth beleeue to be quite of all that shee oweth, esteeming verye little that shee hath here beneath. Shee forsaketh

Roma. 5.

saketh hir olde father, and all the
goodes that he giueth hyr, for hyr
husbands sake. For surely, O my
GOD, it hurteth my soule, to be
fedde with such good: and agayne,
releéued in leauing the pleasure of
this world, for that which is eter=
nall, and where peace is without 2.Iohn.5.
warre. Father, alas, what ought
I to thinke? shall my spirite be so
bolde as to take vpon him to call
thee father? yea, and also our fa=
ther. For so hast thou taught in
the Pater noster. But to call mee Luke.11.
daughter, haste thou so sayde?
I praye thee tell mee. Alas, yea
Lorde, when with great swéete= Prou. 13.
nesse thou saydest: Daughter, lend
me thy hart, and agayne thou say= Math. 9.
dest: Daughter thy fayth hath sa=

ued thée.

O my soule, in steade of lending, my LORDE is readie to giue himselfe wholy vnto thée. Receiue him then, and doe not permit that any creature put him from thée, so that for euer with faythfull steadfastnesse, he may loue thee with a daughterly loue. Nowe my Lord, if thou be my father, may I thinke that I may be thy mother? In deede I can not well perceyue how I shoulde conceyue thée that createst me. But in this matter thou diddest satisfie my doubt when in preaching and in stretching forth thy handes, thou didst saye. Those that shall do the will of my father, they are my brethren, my sister, and my mother. I beléeue then,

Math. 12. Luke. 8.

that

that hearing, and reading the wordes which thou hast taught, & vttered by the holy Prophets and Apostles, & same also which thorow thy true preachers thou doest dayly declare vnto men, in beléeuing it, and stedfastlye desiring to fulfill the same, I conceyue thée, and beare thée by loue.

Therefore without any feare, I will take vppon mée the name of a mother. What, mother of God? O sweéte virgin Marie, I beseech thée be not angrie that I take vp such a title. I doe neyther steale nor vsurpe any thing vppon thy priuiledge. For thou onely aboue all women, receyuedst of hym so great honour, that no man can in himselfe comprehend how he hath

bene willing to take in thée our
Math.1. flesh. For thou art the mother and
perfite virgin, before, and after,
and in his holy birth. In thy blef-
fed wombe thou didst beare hym,
and nourishe him. Thou dydst fol-
lowe him in his tribulations, and
also in his teachings. Now briefly
to conclude, thou hast with God
founde such grace, as the enimye
thorow malice and deceyt had cau-
fed Adam and hys posteritie to
lose. By Eaue, and him wée haue
1.Cor.15. lost it, and by thy Sonne hath it
bëene yéelded vnto vs agayne.

Therefore hast thou bene righ-
Luke.1. teously called full of grace, as one
to whome the Lorde hath shewed
abundant fauour. Sith then, that
he, which is the best among them,

that

that be good, and also the spring of all goodnesse and power, hath created in thée, so pure innocencie, that he in thée, of all other the example of vertue, hath buylded hys dwelling and temple: he thorowe loue dyd confirme hymselfe with thée, and thou thorowe grace art confirmed in him. Therefore no man can giue thée greater prayse than God himselfe hath giuē thée. For there is no such prayse, as is the same, which commeth from God. thou also hast had so firme and constant a fayth, that thou by the holy ghost was filled with all godlinesse. I will not take vpon me therefore to giue to thée greater prayse, than the honor which thy sonne and soueraigne Lorde hath

gyuen thee, and as thou art hys corporall mother, so art thou thorowe fayth his spirituall mother: And I following thy fayth wyth all humblenesse, am hys spirituall mother also.

Alas, my God, the brotherlynesse that thou hast towardes me, thorow thy humblenesse in calling me sister, is great. For thou hast broken the kindred of myne olde father, calling me daughter by adoption. Seeing then ỹ we haue both one father, I will not feare to call thee my brother. For thou hast so reported it by the wyse Salomon in hys Canticle, saying: Roma.3. Cant.4. My sister and spouse, thou hast wounded my hart with the sweete loke of one of thine eyes &c. Alas my

my brother, I fry she for nothing
else, but that in wounding thee I
might find my self wounded with
thy loue, to that would I giue o=
uer my selfe. And likewyse, thou
doest call mée wyse, speaking to
me these amorous wordes: Aryse Cant. 2.
my dearc doue, and come hither=
ward my delectable spouse. Wher=
fore I may say with louing fayth,
thou art mine and I am thine, be=
cause thou hast called me thy loue
and fayre spouse. If it be so, such
hast thou made mee. Alas, doth it
plese thée to giue me such names?
Truely they are able to breake the
hart, and cause it to burne thorow
loue vnspeakeable, when it thin=
keth vppon the honour, that thou
doest vnto the Soule, which is

much greater than it hath deser-
ued. A mother, a mother? Alas,
but of what childe is it? My God,
my sonne? O Jesus what speach
is this? Mother, Daughter, Si-
ster, and Brother. O happie kin-
red. O what swéeteneſſe doth pro-
céede out of that paternitie? But
what daughterlye and reuerent
feare ought I to haue towarde
him, my father, yea, & my creator,
my protector and Sauiour, to be
my brother. Alas, here is a great
loue. I will there saye with Salo-
Cant. 8. mon. Nowe can my heart no lon-
ger refraine but breake in sunder,
to make rowme for the same so
swéete a brother, so that none o-
ther name be written in the same,
but onely the name of my brother

Jesus

Iesus the sonne of God. Actes.4.

None other creature will I giue place to, for all the scurging & beating that can be done vnto me. Kéepe my hart then my deare brother & loue, & let not thine enimie enter into it. O my swéete father, my childe, my brother, and spouse, with handes ioyned humbly vpon my knées, I yéelde thée thankes and prayses, that it pleaseth thée to turne thy face towardes mée, conuerting my hart and couering me with such grace, that thou dost sée no more my euilles and sinnes. So well hast thou hidden them, that it séemeth that thou hast put them in forgetfulnesse, yea, and also, they séeme to be forgotten to me, which haue done and coummitted Ezech.33.

ted them. For tayth and loue so
working in me, causeth me to for-
get them, wholy putting my trust
in thée alone.

Then my father in whom lyeth
vnkayned loue, whereof can I
haue feare in my heart? I confesse
that I haue done all the euill that
Psal.31. one creature can doe, and that of
my self I am naught. Also I haue
offended thée as dyd the prodigall
Luke.15. child, following the foolish trade of
the flesh, wherewith I haue pro-
digally spent the substance and a-
bundaunce of goodes, which thou
here hast giuen mée to vse to thy
glorye. And for the mispending of
them, pouertie hath taken mée,
and hath withered me away, euen
as haye, and yélded my spirite
dead

dead for hunger, compelling me to eate the relefe of swyne, but in such meates I founde verye little sauour. Then I seeing my lyfe to be so miserable, I dyd returne to thée my father agayne, saying: Alas deare father, I haue sinned agaynst heauen, and before thée. I am therfore no more worthy to be called thy childe. But O bountifull and mercifull father, do thou no worse to me, than to one of thy housholde seruantes. Alas, deare father, what loue, & zeale is thys, that thou wouldest not tarie my comming and prayer, but spédily stretching forth thy handes, receyuedst mee when I dyd thinke thou wouldest not looke on mée, and so receyuing mée, in steade to

haue

haue punished, thou didst assure me of my saluation. Where is he then that shall punishe mée, when my father shal deny him my sinne? There is no iudge that can condemne mée, vnlesse God himselfe will damne me. The want of goodnesse I feare not. For I haue my God for my father. My enimie shall doe me no harme. For my father will take all his strength awaye from him. If I owe anye thing, he shall paye it for me. If I haue deserued death, he, as a king shall pardon mée, and deliuer me from prison and death.

But here is the worst. What maner of mother haue I bene? for after that I by faith had receyued the name of a true mother, I became

came very rude vnto thée, my son, bicause that after I had conceiued and brought thée forth, I left reason, and being subiect to my wyll, not taking heede vnto thee, I fell a sléepe, and gaue place to my great enimie, the which in the night of ignorance, I being a sléepe, dyd steale thée from me craftily, and in thy place she dyd put hir childe, which was deade, and so dyd I leése thée, which was a sorowfull remorse for me. Thus did I lose thee my sonne, by mine owne fault bycause I toke no héede to kéepe thée. Sensualitie my neighbour, I being in my beastlye sléepe, dyd steale thée from mée, and gaue to me hir childe, which had no lyfe in him, named sinne, whom I layde, Roma.7. Rom.5.

I

I woulde not haue, but vtterlye did forsake him.

Shee affirmed, that hee was mine owne. But I knewe him to be hirs. For as soone as I came to the light of grace which thou hadst giuen me, then I knewe my glorie to be chaunged, when I saw the dead childe not to be mine. For the same which was aliue, whome she had take away, was my child: so apparant was the chaunge betwene Iesus and sinne. But now here is a straung thing. This old woman causeth mee to keepe thys deade childe whome she reporteth to be mine, and so will she maintayne. O Salomon, thou true and wyse iudge, thou hast hearde thys lamentable processe, and ordayned

Roma.3.

to

to content the parties, that the childe shoulde bee deuyded in two parts. The false woman agreeth it shoulde be so. But I remembring him to be myne owne sonne, which was aliue, was rather content to leese him, than to see hys bodie parted in twayne. For true and perfite loue is neuer content with ẏ one halfe of that it loueth. Rather I had therefore to weepe for the whole, than to reccuer the halfe without lyfe. Alas noble Salomon, giue to hir the childe which is aliue, for better it is for me to dye than to see my sonne diuided. But my Lorde thou dydst better loke to it, than I. For thou seeing the anguishe, that I dyd suffer, and howe I rather dyd for-

forsake my right, than to beholde such cruelnesse, thou saydest, this is the true mother, and so caused them to giue me my childe againe, for whom before my hart was sorowfull.

O sweete Iesus, thus hast thou proued me, howe much I loued thee, yea; and when by sinne I had lost thee, yet dyddest thou returne vnto me. Alas, howe gently doest thou vouchsafe to come agayne to hys, which being lette by sinne, coulde not keepe thee my sweete childe, my sweete Sonne, my helper, my nourisher, of whome I am an humble creature. Doe not permit that euer I doe leaue thee againe. For I doe repent the time past.

Gene.6.

Now

Now come sensualitie with thy rablement of sinnes. Thou hast no power to make mée to receyue thy dead childe. For my Sonne is strong, and will defende me, hée shall not permitte that thou take him any more away from me. Hys strength is greater than anye others. Therefore maye I slépe, and take realt neare him. For all thinges well considered, hée shall kéepe me from thine assaultes. O sweéte rest of the mother, and the sonne togither, my sweéte chylde, my God, onely vnto thée be honor and prayse, for that euery creature may séé howe it hath pleased thée, to call mée, lesse than nothing, a mother. And ỹ more it is straunge and harde to be done, the more Esay.32. Psalm.11.

ought thy goodnesse to haue prayse for it. And further, thou hast retayned me for thy sister, wherefore I acknowledge my selfe more bound, than to any other creature.

Nowe I am sister vnto thée, but so naughtie a sister that better it were for me that I were wythout the name, than I to forgette the name of adoption in so noble a kindred, and also thy good and brotherly behauiour towardes me. I with pryde did ryse agaynst thée, not remẽbring my faults, but going astraye from thée, dyd agrée with Aaron my brother, being in will to giue iudgement against thy workes, & following the example of Miriam, priuilye I grudged against thée, which thing caused me

Num. 12.

to

to haue remorse in my conscience. Alas right bountifull brother and true Moses, which doest all with goodnesse and iustice, I haue estéemed thy workes to be euen sinne, being so bolde to speake euen rashlye, saying: Wherefore hast thou maryed a straunge woman? Thou giuest vs a law and punishment, if we doe not fulfill it, and then thou wouldest not be bounde to it, forbidding vs the thing which thou thy selfe doest. Deut.8.

For thou forbiddest vs to kill any man, and thou doest kill, and spareste none, of thrée thousande, which thou commaundest to bée slaine. Further, God gaue vs in commaundement by thée, that we shoulde not marie the daughter of Ephe.3.a.

a straunger, yet thou tookest thy wyfe from among them. Alas, my deare brother Moses with a great manye of these wordes which I know to be foolishe, wyth Aaron, and Miriam, whichis mine owne witte, I vnbrayded thee, whereof I repent. For the liuely voyce of God, rebukingly, tooke me vp, before I went out of the place. What wouldest thou then of my sinne? Thou wouldest not haue me punished, but rather wouldest my saluation and health, in asking for me this great benefite; that it might please God to mittigate his iudgement, the which thing thou couldest not obtayne. Wherefore, I became a lazar, so that all, that looked on me might well saye, I had

Exo. 34.

Nume. 12.

had not béne wise, and for my vn=
cleannesse and leprosie, I was put
out from the tentes and taberna=
cles from among the people, by=
cause ỹ sicke shoulde not infect such
as were whole. Oh what soule
can haue a greater punishment,
than to be banished out of the com=
panie of them which are holye in
God: But what diddest thou my
swéete lorde and brother, séeing my
repentaunce? Thou mouidest
that my penaunce was done at an
ende, and with true loue madest
meanes for me, whereupon I re=
tourned thé. O what brother
woulde, in steade to punish his fo=
lishe sister, so naturally cleane vn=
to hir? For iniurie, grudge, and
great offence, by hir committing,

1. Iohn. 2.

thou giuest hir grace, and done in recompẽce. Alas my brother, howe excéding is this thy loue? Much more is it than brotherhode is bounde to gyue, to so poore and wretched a woman as I am. I haue done thée euil, and thou gyuest mée good for it. I am thyne, and thou sayest, thou art myne. Euen so I am, and euer will. I feare no more thé great foolishnesse of Aaron and Miriam, for no man may separate me from thée, and now ther for are together; as brother and sister, I care little for all other. For thy lande is myne inheritaunce.

Philip. 2. Let vs then kéepe, if it please thée, but one houshold, sith it hath pleased thée to humble thy selfe so much,

much, as to ioyne thy heart wyth mine in making thy ſelfe a lyuelye man. I doe right hartily thanke thée, and to thanke thée as I ought, lyeth not in my power. Take my meaning then I praye thée, and excuſe my ignorance, ſéeing I am of ſo great a kinred, as to be thy ſiſter. O my GOD, I haue good cauſe to loue, to prayſe, and to ſerue thée vnfaynedly, and not to feare, nor to deſire any thing ſaue thée onely. Kéepe mée well then, I humbly praye thée. For I will aſke none other brother nor friende to helpe me. If any father haue had anye pittie vppon hys childrē, if any mother haue taken any care for hir ſonne, if any bro-ther haue hid the ſinne of his ſi-ſter,

ter, it is thou: I neuer sawe, or else it was kept wondrous secret, that euer husband would thoroughly forgiue his wife, after shée had him once offended, and did returne vnto him.

Hest.14.

There haue bene many of them which for to auenge their wrõgs, haue caused the Iudges to put them to death. Other beholding theyr sinnes, dyd not spare theyr owne handes to kill them. Other also séeing their faults to appeare, did send them home again to their owne friendes. And some perceyuing their euill dispositions, haue shutte them vp in prison. Nowe briefly to conclude vpon their diuers complexions, the end of their pretence is punishment, and the least

Nero.

least harme that euer I could perceyue in punishing them, is this, that they would neuer see them agayne. But I doe wish that all of this minde shoulde rather helpe to turne them, than to forsake them. And therfore my God, I can finde no man to be compared vnto thée. For of loue thou art the perfite example. Nowe therefore I confesse with lowly hart, that I haue broken to thée my othe and promise.

Alas, thou haddest chosen mée for thy wyfe, and dydst set mée vp in great state, and honour. For what greater honour maye one haue, than to be in the place of thy wyfe, which sweétely taketh hyr rest so neare to thée, and not onely

Iohn.15.

in

in suretie of soule and bodie, but also of all thy goodes quéene, mistresse and Ladie. O what great fauor is it, that so vyle a creature, am so ennoblished by thée to so honorable an husbād. Now to speake it briefly, I haue more by the possessing of thée, than any man mortall canne desire. Yet when I remember my vnworthe deseruing, my heart doth sobbe and sigh, mine eyes let fall aboundaunce of teares, my mouth cannot make to many exclamations. For there is neither newe, nor auncient writings, that can shewe so pitifull a case as the same is which I tell nowe. Shall, or dare I tell it? May I pronounce it wythout shame? yea. For my confusion is

it

it not to shew the great loue of my husbande, and for his worshipp to declare my fault.

O my sauiour, which was crucified on the crosse for my sinnes. This deede of thine is not such, as a father to leaue his sonne, or as a childe to offende his mother, or as a sister to chide and grudge. But alas, my fault is such, and farre more greater. For the more familiaritie I haue with thée, and the more benefites I receyue of thée, the greater is myne offence, when I with thée dissemble, Especially that I shoulde so doe, which am called thy spouse, and loued of thée as thy soule. Shall I nowe tel the truth? O my spouse I haue left thée, forgotten thée, and am Esay. 5.

run

run awaye from thée. I dyd leaue thée, for to go at my vayne pleasure. I forsoke thée and chose me another. yea, I refused thée, the welspring of all goodnesse, and faythfull promyse. I dyd leaue thée: But whither went I? Into a place where nothing was but cursednesse. Iob.10.

I haue lefte thée my trustie friend and louer, worthy to be beloued aboue all others, I haue put thée alyde. O welspring of all helthsomnesse, by mine owne wretched wyll. yea, I haue forsaken thée, full of beautie, goodnesse, wisedome, and power, and sought to withdrawe me from thy loue. I haue accepted thy great enimies, that is, the deuill, the worlde, and

the

the flesh, against whome for my sake thou sustainedst so sore on the crosse to set mée at libertie, which was by them of long tyme a pry= soner, and slaue, and so bound that no man coulde cause me to hum= ble my selfe. And as for the loue and charitie that I shoulde haue had towards thée, they dyd quench it, so that the name of Jesus my deare husbande, which before I had found so swéete, was to me te= dious and hatefull, so that often= tymes I did iest at it: and when I haue hearde the Gospell prea= ched or taught, the word which I haue harde, hath not taryed with mée, but as a fether doth in the winde. Hebr. 12.

I went neuer yet to heare thy worde

worde preached, but for maner only, which was a worke of hypocrisie. I was also annoyed, when I heard speake of thée, bycause I was more willing to goe at my pleasure. Now briefly to conclude, all that thou diddest forbid me, I fulfilled, and all that thou commaundest me to doe, I did eschew, and this was the cause, why I loued not thée. But yet Lord, for all that I did this hate thée, and forsake thée, ranne awaye from thée, and betrayed thée, shoulde I gyue place to any other? O hast thou suffered, that I shoulde be mocked, eyther yet beaten or killed? Hast thou put me in darke prison, or banished mée for euer, setting naught by me? Hast thou taken

away

away thy gifts & precious iewels againe from me, to punishe me for my vnfaithfull fruites? Haue I lost my ioynter, which thou promisedst me, thorow mine owne offence done against thée, and I accused by thée, afore the eternall father, for a naughtie woman? Hast thou forbidden mée thy presence, as I haue deserued, and that I shoulde neuer appeare in thyne house?

O most true husbande, pure, and perfite friende, the most louing among all louers. Alas thou hast done otherwyse by mée. For thou hast diligently sought for me, when I was going into the most deepe place of hell, where ill euils are done. When I was farthest

from

from thée both in hart and minde, and directly out of the waye, than diddest thou lowingly call me back, saying, my deare daughter hearken and sée, and bowe thyne eare toward me. Forget that straunge nation wyth whom thou hast run astray, and also the house of thyne olde father where thou hast dwelt so long, and then shall the king of all faithfulnesse desire thy beauty. But when thou Lord sawest, that thy sweete and gracious calling, did not profite me: than beganst thou to crie to méé with a lowde voyce, saying. Come vnto méé all yóu which are wearily laden with labour. For I ám he that shall plenteously refreshe you, and fée de you with the breade of lyfe.

Math.11.

Alas

Alas, swéete Lorde, vnto all these swéete wordes would I not harken, but rather doubted whether it were thou that so spake vnto méé, or else a fabulous writing, that so sayde. I was so foolishe that without loue I red thy worde. I considered not the comparison of the vineyarde, which brought forth thornes and briers in steade of good fruite, and that it signified me, that so had done. I knewe also, that when thou didst call the barren wyfe, saying, returne Sulamite, that thou didst speake it, that I shoulde forsake my sinne: yet for as these wordes did I, as though I had vnderstande neuer a whit. But when I had perused the Prophete Jere-

Esay.5.

Canti.6.

mie, I confesse that I had in the reading thereof, feare in my heart, and bashfulnesse in my face. I will tell it, yea, with teares in my eyes, and all Lorde, for thy honour, and to suppresse my pryde. Thou hast
Ieremie. 2. sayde by that holye Prophet: if a woman hath offended hir husband, and is so left of hym, for going astray with other, if hée thereupon refuseth hir, is she not to be estéemed polluted, and of no value?

The lawe doth consent to put hir in the handes of iustice, or to driue hir awaye, and so neuer to take hir agayne. Thou hast made a separation betweéne thy bed and mine, sayeth he vnto me, and placed forren louers in my rowme, communicating with them fornicati-

on.

on. Yet for all this thou mayst re= Ezechi.16.
turne to mée agayne. For I will
not alwayes be angry against thée.
Lyft vp therefore thyne eyes, and
loke aboute thée on euerys side,
and then shalt thou well sée, in=
to what place thy sinne hath ledde
thée, and how filthily thou lyest in
the earth. O poore soule loke
where thy sinne hath put thée, e=
uen vppon the high wayes, where
thou didst wayte, and tarie to be=
guyle them, that came by, euen as
a theéfe doth, which is hidden in
the wilderneſſe. Therfore thou in Ierem.2.
fulfilling thy wicked pleasure, hast
wyth fornication infected all the
earth, which was aboute thee.
Thine eyes, thy forehead, and thy
face, haue loſt all their good ma=

ner. For they were such as an harlote hath, and yet thou haddest no shame of thy sinne.

And the surplus that Jeremie sayeth, constrayneth me to knowe my wretched life, and to wish with
Iob.10. sorrowfull sighes the houre, the moneth, the daye, the yeare, and tyme that my lyfe myght haue an ende, yéelding my selfe condemned, and worthie to be for euer in the euerlasting fire. The same feare, which proceédeth of thée, and not of my selfe, putteth me rather in hope, than in dispaire, as often as I doe remember my sinne. For as soone as thou knewest my will, bowing vnder thine obedience, thã putting in me a liuely fayth, thou didst vse great clemencie, so that after

after I knew thée to be that same Lorde, Maister, and king, whome I ought to haue feared: then foūd I my feare not quenched, but mixed with loue, beléeuing that thou art so gracious, gentle, and swéete, and so pittifull an husband, that I which should rather haue hid me, than to haue shewed my selfe, was not then in feare to go forth, and to looke for thée, and so séeking I founde thée.

But what diddest thou then, diddest thou refuse me? No Lord, but rather hast excused mée. Hast thou turned thy face from me? No. For thine eye so swéetely penetrated my heart, that it wounding it almost to the death, did giue to me remorse of my sinnes. Thou hast Canti. 4.

not put mée backe with thy hande, but with both thine armes, and with a sweéte & manly heart, thou didst méete with mé by the waye, and not once reprouing my faults, embracedst me. I coulde not sée in beholding thy countenaunce, that euer thou didst once perceiue mine offences. Wherfore thou hast done so much for me, as though I had neuer broken promyse with thée. For thou dyddest hyde my faulte from euerye bodie, in giuing me agayne the part of the bed, and also in shewing, that the multitude of my sinnes are so hidden, and ouercome by thy great victorie, that thou wilt neuer remember them more: so that nowe thou séest nothing in me, but the graces, gifts, and

and vertues, which it hath pleased thy free godnesse to giue me.

O charitie most precious, I do see well that thy godnesse doth cõsume my lewdnesse, and maketh me a new, godly, and ioyfull creature. The euill, that was myne, thou hast destroyed, and made me so perfite a creature, that all the good a husbande can doe to hys wife, thou hast done it to me, in giuing mée a faythfull hope in thy promises. Nowe haue I thorowe thy good grace, recouered the place of thy wyfe. O happie, and desired place, gracious bedde, thou ryght honorable seate of peace, rest from all warre, high sleepe of honour, separate from the earth, dost thou receyue this vnworthie creature,

giuing hir the scepter and crowne of thy empire & glorious Realme? who did euer heare of such a story? as to rayse vp one so hygh, which of hir selfe was nothing, and maketh of great valure, which of it selfe was naught.

Iohn. 3. Alas, what is this? For I casting myne eyes on high, doe sée thy goodnesse, thy vnknown grace, and thy loue so incomprehensible, that my sight is wonderfull in beholding thée. But I looking downewarde, might sée what I am, & what I was willing to be. Alas, I doe sée in it the lewdnesse darcknesse & extreme déepenesse of my euils, my death, which by hũblenesse closeth mine eye: the admirable goodnesse of thée, and the vn-

vnspeakeable euil, which is in me. Thy ryght hyghnesse, and pure maiestie, my right fragill and mor= tall nature. Thy giftes, goodes, and beatitude, my malice & great vnkindenesse. Sapi.14.

O how good art thou vnto me, and how vnkinde haue I bene vn= to thée? This that thou wilt, and this that I pursue, which things considered, causeth mée to mar= uayle how it pleaseth thée to ioyne thy selfe to me, séeing there is no comparison betweéne vs both. Thou art my God, and I am thy worke, thou my creator, and I thy creature. Howe to speake briefly, though I cannot define, what it is to be of thée, yet know I my selfe to be the least thing that may bée com=

compared vnto thee, O most happie Ioue, thou madest this agreement, when thou dydst ioyne lyfe and death togither, but the vnion hath made aliue death, lyfe dying, and life without ende, haue made our death a lyfe. Death hath gyuen vnto lyfe a quickening, that thorow death I being deade, may receyue lyfe: and by death, I am rauished with him, which is aliue. I liue in him, otherwyse of my self I am deade. And as concerning bodily death, to me it is nothing, but a comming out of pryson. Death is to me lyfe. For thorowe death, I am aliue. And as thys mortall life filleth me full of care, and sorrowe, so death yéeldeth me content.

Meditation.

O what a godlye thing is it to die, that the soule may liue? For in deliuering hir from this mortal death, shée is deliuered from the death miserable, and matched with hir most mightie louer. Is not then the soule blamelesse, which fayne woulde die to haue lyfe. yes truely, and ought to call death hir welbeloued friende. O sweéte death, pleasant sorrowe, mightye king, deliuering from all wickednesse. O Lorde, those which trust in thée, and in thy death, are mortified by the hope they haue in thy passion. Apo.14. Rom.3.

Thus wyth a sweéte sléepe doest thou putte them out of that death, which causeth many to lament. O howe happy is the same sléepe

slēpe vnto him, which when he awaketh, doth finde thorowe thy death, lyfe euerlasting. For death is none other thing to a christen man, but a libertie or deliueraunce from his mortall bande. And the death which is fearefull to the wicked, is pleasaunt and acceptable to them that are good, bycause that death thorowe death is destroyed.

Rom. 7.

Therefore my God, if I were rightly taught, I should call death lyfe, the ende of labour, and beginning of euerlasting ioye. For I knowe that long lyfe doth let mē from the sight of thē. O death come and doe thine office on mē, that I maye sē my spouse, or elfe swēte loue, transforme me in thēr,

Psal. 33.

and

and then shall I the better tarye the comming of death. O sweéte Lorde let me die, that I may lyue with thée. For there is none other that can deliuer me, but thou onely. O my sauiour, thorow faith I am planted & ioyned with thée. O what vnion is this, sith that thorow faith I am assured to thée, and may call thée father, brother, sonne, and husbande. Iohn.15.

O my father what paternitie? O my brother what fraternitie? O my childe, what delectation? O my spouse, what coniunction is this? A father full of humilitie, a brother hauing our similitude, a sonne engendred thorow fayth and loue, a husbande louing and relieuing in all extremitie. But whom Apo.12.

doest

doest thou loue? Alas, it is shée, whome thou hast withdrawne frō the snare, wherein thorow malice she was bounde, and hast put hir in place, name, and office of a daughter, sister, mother, and wife. O my sauiour, it is a great sauour of swéetnesse, right pleasaunt, and delectable, when a soule after the hearing of thy worde, shal call thē without feare, his father, his brother, childe, and spouse, such a soule doubtlesse may continually burne in loue.

Is there any loue vnlesse it be this maner of loue, but it hath some euill condition? Is there any pleasure to be hereto compared? Is there any honor to this, but may be accounted shame? yea

is

is there any profit equall to this? Iohn.14.
Moreouer to conclude, is there a-
ny thing that I coulde more ear-
nestly loue? Alas no. For he that
vnfeynedly loueth God, reputeth
all these thinges worldly of lesse
valure than the dunghill. Plea-
sure, profit, & honor of this world,
are all but vanitie, and trifles vn-
to him which hath founde God.
Such loue is so profitable, hono-
rable, and aboundant in grace, that
I dare saye shée onely sufficeth the 2.Cor.3.
heart of a godly soule, and yéelderth
hir so content, that she neuer desi-
reth or woulde heare other. For
whosoeuer hath God as he ought
to be had, accounteth all other
things superfluous or vayne.

Moreouer thanked be my Lord, and
my

my father, thorowe fayth I haue gotten the same loue, wherefore I ought to be satisfied and content. Nowe haue I thée my father, for defence of my wanton foolishnesse, in my long youth. Nowe haue I thée my brother, for to succour my sorrowes, wherein I finde no end. Nowe haue I thée my sonne, for my feebie age, as an onely staye. Now haue I thée a true & fayth-full husbande, for the satisfying of my whole heart. And nowe sith I haue thee, I wyll, and doe forsake all them that are in the world, holding thée fast, that thou mayest no more escape me. Séeing now that I haue possessed thée, I will looke vpon none other thing, that might kéepe méé backe, from

Philip.2.

the

the beholding of thy diuinitie. Seeing ꝑ I do heare thée, I will heare nothing ꝑ letteth me frō the fruition of thy voyce. Seéing ꝑ I may freely talke with thée, I will common & none other. Seing it pleaseth thée to put me so neére thée, I will rather dye, than to touch any other, & seéing I serue thée, I will serue none other. Seing that thou hast ioyned thy hart with mine, if it depart from thée, let him be punished for euer. For the departing from thy lone is harder than is any damnation. I doe not feare the payne of ten thousande helles, as I doe feare the once losing of thée. Iohn.10.

Alas, my God, my father, and creator, doe not thou suffer that the enimie, inuenter of all sinne,

haue anye power to make mée to lose thy presence. For whosoeuer shall feele the losse of thy loue, shall say, he would rather be bounde for euer in hell, than to feele the payne thereof one moment of tyme. O my sauiour, doe thou not permitte that euer I depart from thée agayne, but ỹ it may please thée, to put mée in such a place, that my soule thorow wantonnesse of sinne be neuer seperated from thy loue.

In this world, I cannot perfitly haue this my desire, which thing maketh me feruently to desire, the departing from this body of sinne, not fearing death nor any of hir instruments. For what feare ought I to haue of my God, which thorow loue offred himselfe, and suf-

Roma.7.

Hebr.9.

fered

fered death, not of det, or duety, but onely bicause he would for my sake vndoe the power of mortall death. Nowe is Iesus deade, in whome we are all dead, and thorowe his death wee all shall liue. I meane those, which thorow fayth are pertakers of his passion. For euen as the death before the great misterie of the crosse was harde to euery man, & there was no man but was feared therwith, cõsidering ỹ copulation of the body, & the soule, their order, loue, and agreément, so were their sorowes extreme in departing of the one from the other.

But since it hath pleased the sweéte lambe to offer himselfe vpon the crosse, his great loue hath kindled a fire within the heart, so

vehement that euery true beléeuer
Sapi.3. estéemeth the passage of death but
a playe, or pastime, and so prouo-
keth other constantly to dye. And
euen as the feare of death doth re-
trograde vs, so ought loue to giue
vs a desire to die. For if true loue
be vnfeynedly within the heart of
man, he can féele none other thing
bycause loue is so strong of it selfe,
that she kéepeth all the rowme,
and putteth out all other desires,
suffering nothing there but God
1.Iohn.4. onely. For whereseuer true, and
perfit loue is, there is remembred
neyther feare nor sorrow. Yet our
owne pryde to attayne honor, cau-
seth vs to seke death many straūge
wayes, as if a man to haue his fo-
lishe pleasure putteth hymselfe in
icoper-

ieoperdie of lyfe. If a Marchant to obtayne riches, doth daunger himselfe sometyme for a small valure, if the théefe conceyuing of robbrie, or murder, crueltie or deceyt, doth so blinde a man that hée doubteth nothing the daunger of death, neyther yet misfortune, when hée séeketh to aduenge himselfe, or doth any other euill, if the furie of sicknesse, or the ranckenesse of melancholy causeth a man fiercely to wishe for death, or oftentymes to drowne, hange, or kyll themselues, such euilles are sometyme so great, that they cause theyr payned paciente to chose death for libertie. If it so bée then that these paynes full of euilles and imperfections, causeth

Deutr.16

Ecclesi.1.

 them

them not to feare the hazarde of death, but rather to thinke that death taryeth to long, alas, what ought true and laudable loue to doe. What ought the loue of the eternall creature to wish? shoulde she stirre a hart in such wyse, that he being maistred with such affectiõs, should feele none other thing in him? Alas yea. For death is a pleasant thing to the soule, which is in loue with God, & esteémeth the passage easie, thorow the which she commeth out of prison. For the harde way where thorow she commeth, can be no let for hir to imbrace hir husbande. O my sauiour howe good and pleasaunt is the same death, thorow whom I shall haue the ende of all sorrowes?

And

And by whome I shall enioye thy sight without impediment, and be transformed into the likenesse of thy Maiestie:

O death thorowe thy force, I trust to haue such honour, as vpon my knées with crying and weéping, I dayly do desire. Therfore come quickiye, and make an ende of my sorrowes. O happye daughters, right holy soules, ioyned to the Citie Jerusalem, open your eyes, and with pittie looke vpon my desolation. I beseéch you that for méé, and in my name yée doe shewe vnto my deare, and best beloue, my God, my friende, and my king, howe that euery houre of the daye, I doe languishe for hys presence. O sweete death, come Canti. 5.

vnto me, and louingly bring mée vnto my Lorde God. O death where is now thy sting and dart? Alas, are they banished from mine eyes? Is not rigour chaunged into sweétenesse, séeing that for my sake, my friende dyd suffer vpon the crosse, whose death doth so encourage me, that death I wishe to followe him?

1. Cor. 15.

Sith then that death is so pleasaunt to meé, that it pleaseth mée more than feareth meé, then ought I to feare nothing, but onelye the ryght iudgement of GOD. My sinnes with his iust balaunce shall be wayed, & all that I haue done, openlye shall be shewed, my thoughts and wordes shal be better knowne, than they were writ-

ten.

ten in a rowle. Wherefore I may not thinke that charitie would offend iustice, & truth. For certaine it is, whosoeuer lyueth vnfaythfully, shall be punished in euerlasting payne. For God is iust and his iudgement righteous, and all that he doth is perfite in all thinges. What am I then, considering my owne righteousnesse? A wretch, and poore creature. Psal.118.

I know that all the workes of iust men are so full of imperfection that afore God they are more filthie than myre, or other vilenesse. What will it be then, concerning the sinnes which I haue committed, whereof I feele the burthen importable? I can nothing else saye, but that I haue wonne by Esay.64.

them

them damnatiõ. Is this the ende? Shall dispaire then be the comfort of my great ignorannce? Alas my God, no: For the inuisible faith causeth me to beleéue that all thinges, which are impossible to man, are possible vnto theé, so that thou do conuert my worke, which is nothing, into some good worke of thine in me, which is specially faith. Then my Lorde who shall condemne me, or what Iudge will damne meé, sith that thou which art my iudge, art also my father, my spouse, and my refuge. Alas what father? Such as doth neuer condemne his childe, but alwayes doth excuse, and defend him.

Hebr. 11.

Luke. 18.

Then I perceyue to haue none other excuser, but Iesus Christ

which

which is my spouse, & my redéemer whose death hath restored méé my lost inheritance. For he made himselfe my man of lawe, shewing his so worthy merits afore his father, wherwith my great det is so abū=dantly recompenced, þ in iudgemēt it is nothing. O redéemer, here is a great loue. I finde but few such men of law. O sweéte Iesus, it is to théé that I am a debter, yet dost thou both pray and speake for me, and moreouer when thou dost séé, that I am poore, with the abound=daunce of thy goodes, thou doste paye my debt. O incomprehensible sea of all goodnesse. O my deare father, doest thou vouchsafe to béé my iudge, not willing the death of a sinner? O Iesus Christ, crucifier

1. Iohn. 2.

Matth. 18.

ker and sauer of the soule, frende aboue all frendes, thou being my man of law, didst excuse and speake for me, where thou couldest iustlye haue accused me.

I feare no more therefore the crueltie of myne enimie. For the law by thée is satisfied for all. The payment is so made by my swéete spouse, that the lawe can aske nothing of me, but it is paide by him. For as I beléeue that he hath taken all my sinnes vpon him, and hath giuen me in place of them, his owne gooddes in aboundance: so O my sauiour, thou presenting thy vertues, dost content the lawe. And when she will reproche me of my sinnes, thou doest shewe her how willingly in thine owne flesh,

Esay. 53.

thou

thou haſt taken the diſcharge of them through the communion of our mariage. Alſo vpon the croſſe throwe thy paſſion, thou haſte made ſatiſfaction for it. Moreouer thy onely charitie hath gyuen me this, that thou haſt for me deſerued. Therefore ſéeing thy merite to be mine, the lawe can aſke nothing of me. Nowe then will I feare no more the iudgement, but with deſire more than with perforce I will tarie the tyme that I ſhall ſée my iudge, and heare a iuſt iudgement of him. 1. Peter. 2. 1. Iohn. 4.

I know that thy iudgement is iuſt, and that there is no fault therein, although my infidelitie is worthie to ſuffer the cruelneſſe of hell. For if I doe onelye conſider my

my deseruing; yet I can see nothing in it that can keepe me from the fire of hell. For true it is that the torment of hell was prepared for the deuill and his children. So if anye man haue set his minde to be like to the deuill by sensuall appetite, then ought he, as the deuil, to be payde with a lyke rewarde.

Math.25.

But if a man thorow contemplation of the soule, doe holde of thé his Angell of counsell, vertue, and perfection, he is sure to obtayne heauen, which is a place of thy deseruing for him: Then shall the wicked be punished with the same punishment, which they ought to haue, to whome they haue ioyned themselues. For sith they followed Sathan, they must enioye such

Luke.13.

place,

place, as is for him, and his Aun-
geis prepared.

Now, I considering the diuer-
sitie of both the sortes, am little
comforted in spirite by this. For
I can not denye, but that I am
more like the Deuil, than the aun-
gell of light. Wherefore I feare &
tremble. For as the Aungell is
pure and perfite, so am I vn-
pure and perfite, and am nothing
lyke vnto him. But thus I con-
fesse, that to the other I am so like He br.
in my doings, and so accustomed in
his wayes, that of his payne, and
torment I ought to be partaker.
For the cruell sinne, which hath
bounde me in hell, is so great, and
his force so strong, that it letteth
nothing to come from it, neyther

sea-

feareth it the contrarie assaulte.

Luke.11. But he, whose force lyeth in thys kinde of strength, knoweth not howe hys strength goeth awaye, when a stronger than he commeth in place.

I coulde neuer yet see, that any man by merite, or payne taking, coulde euer yet vanquish that hell, saue onely he, which did the great assault therowe his vnspeakeable charitie, when he humbled himselfe to the crosse, wherby he hath van-

Philip.2. quished, and ouercome his enimie, robbed Hell of his power, so that nowe it hath no more force and strength to keepe that soule, which putteth hir trust in God. Then beleeuing in the great strength that my Sauiour hath, I doe not set

let by Hell and sinne. For sinne can haue no holde of me, vnlesse it be to shew how my God is merci= full, strong, mightie, and a pui= sant vanquisher of all the euilles within my heart. If by sinnes for= giuenesse is the glorie of my most louing sauiour, then ought I also to beleeue, that my glory is increa= sed by his loue, and that I am planted, and grafted in him. Roma.5.

His honour only doth honor all his, and his riches doth repleniſhe euery one of his with his goodes. Then death, hell, and sinne are o= uercome by him. O glutton ous hell, where is thy defence? Thou cruell villaine sinne, where is thy tiranous power? O death where is thy sting, and victory, which are Apo.5. 1.Cor.15.

so much spoken off: Instead of death, thou death gyuest mé lyfe and so dost thou contrarie to thy will. Also thou sinne coueteth to draw eche creature to damnation, thou giuest me a ladder to reache
Apo.12. thereby that godly Citie Jerusalem, yet wouldest thou of thy cursed nature, that my eternal maker should lose his creature. But thorowe his loue. and grace, the sorie remembrance of thy vncomlinesse doth cause hir by repentaunce agayne to come, and submit hir selfe vnto god, whose inestimable goodnesse causeth thé to lose thy whole labor, which thou takest in hande. For the number that thou pretēdest to haue, thou shalt not haue, because that the comfortable shadowe

dowe of Christ his passion is such a mightie protection to the soule, that she needeth neither to doubt death, sinne, nor hell. Is there any thing than; that can pull me back, if God be willing thorow the gift of fayth to drawe me to hym? I meane such a fayth, as wee must needes haue to obtayne the high graces from aboue, and also such a fayth, as thorowe charitie doth ioyne the humble seruaunt to his maker. Now I being ioyned vnto him, ought to haue no feare of trauayle, payne, nor sorrowe. For whosoeuer doth willingly suffer any maner of death, paine, or sorow, for the truth, as Christ did, he shall feele in such torment, great comfort, and consolation for his soule, Math. 8.

knowing all this, I my selfe am weake, yet with God I am right strong.

Thorowe his comfort I maye doe all thinges, and his loue is so constante, and permanent, that it varieth not for any worldly thing. Who can then withdrwa me from his grace: surely the great heigth of heauen, the deepe of hell, the breadth of the whole earth, neither death, nor sinne, which dayly doth warre against me, can seperate mee one minute from the great loue, and charitie, that my heauenly father, thorowe Jesus Christ hath vnto me. Hys goodnesse is such, that he loueth me, which hath not all times loued him. And if I now loue him, then shall I feele hys loue

Rom.8.

Iohn.4.

loue to increase in mee. But by-
cause that my loue is not a woor-
thy loue to him, I desire his loue
to be mine, which I feele such, as
it were mine owne: his desire is
to loue, and his loue inflameth my
heart with a heauenly loue.

And thorowe such loue he fin-
deth himselfe, that his owne deede
yeeldeth him well content, and not
my loue, or strength: Thus con- Iohn.13.
tenting hymselfe, hys loue doth
more increase in me, than I can of
him desire. O true louer, the foun-
tayne or welspring of all charitie,
and onely purse of the heauenlye
treasure: ought I to thinke, or
dare I say what thou art? Maye
I write, or can any mortall man
comprehende thy goodnesse, and

 loue?

loue? And if thou print in mans hart, can he expresse it? No surely. For the capacitie of man, can not comprehende the vnmeasurable goodnesses which are in thée; for naturall reason doth shewe vs howe there is no comparison betweéne an eternall, and a mortall thing. But when thorow loue the mortall is ioyned with the eternal the mortall thing is so filled wyth the eternall, that it can not fynde the ende thereof, for it hath more good thereby, than it can contayne, or holde. Therefore doth man thinke, which hath one sparke of the loue of GOD, that he hath all the worlde therewith. Euen as we sée the Sunne, with one onely sparkle of his light doth blinde the

Roma.12.

eye

eye, and yet doth shée with holde from it hir great light: if then you shoulde aske the eye what it hath séene, he woulde saye, that it hath beholden the whole brightnesse of the Sunne, although hée being dimmed with a little sparkle ther= of, coulde not séé the brightnesse of the same. Neuertheiesse, he is so content that it séemeth vnto him as though he had so much light as the Sunne cõtayneth, which if he had moze than the sayde sparke, he were not able to suffer it. Euen so the soule, which thozow faith doth féele one sparke of the loue of god, doth finde therewith the heat so great, and marueylous, so swéete, and delicious, that it is impossible to hir to declare what thing the Eccle.

same loue is. For the little thereof that she hath felt, doth yéelde hir minde satisfied, and yet desiring more, whereof shée hath ynough, thus doth shée lyue languishing and sighing of hir selfe.

The heart that doth feéle that hée hath receyued to much, hath conceyued such a desire in thys to much, that he alwayes desireth to receyue the thing which he cannot haue, neyther is he worthy to receyue it. He knoweth not the good that he hath all readie, to bee vnspeakable, and yet woulde he haue more of that, whereof he can not skill: truelye hée can not feéle, or thinke, the good which is in him. Then lyeth it not in my power, to tell what thing the loue of God is,

Phil. 1.

sith

sith I haue no knowledge of the feruentnesse therof. He that thinketh to haue all this loue within his heart, can not truely declare what thing it is: happie is hee therefore which hath such aboundaunce of this loue, that he maye say, my God, I haue ynough of it.

He which hath this loue, within him, dare not much boast therof, least in much speaking he doe lose it, vnlesse hee doe it, to edifie hys neighbour to saluation. The impossibilitie than of the declaration of this loue, shall make me to hold my peace: for there is no Saint so perfite, if he will speake of the loue of the high God, of his goodnesse, sweetnesse, graces, & of all things else, which pertayneth to him, but lo-

Iames. 3.

king

looking a lowe shall finde himselfe vnworthy, and so stop his mouth. I than a worme of the earth, lesse than nothing, ought to cease and not to speake of the incomparable highnesse of this loue: yet were it to much vnkindnesse to be noted in me, if I had written nothing, hauing that done vnto mée which woulde satisfie a much better wit than mine is: For he that would hide the goodnesse of God, so good a maister, shoulde commit a sinne worthy to be punished with euerlasting payne. Math. 25.

Therefore, come O happie Paule, which hath tasted so much of the same swéete Honie, being blinde for the space of thrée dayes, and rapt vp vnto the thirde hea-

uen:

men: and satisfie I beseeche thee, my ignorance, and tell me what in such vision thou hast seene. Harcken them what he sayth. O the vnspeakeable highnesse of the aboundant ryches or treasure, both of the wisedome and knowledge of God: how incomprehensible are his iudgementes, and howe vnsearchable are hys wayes, vnto our weake wittes: O holy Paule thy wordes causeth mée much to maruel, ỹ thou hauing knowledge of so heauenlye secretes wouldest speake no further in them. At the least yet tell thou me, what thing I may hope to haue, throwe such godly loue, as grace hath wrought in me: and I will giue care vnto thy wordes. Neyther hath the eye Rom.11. Sapi.17.

1.Cor.2. eye seene, nor yet the eare hearde, neyther yet hath it euer entred into the hart of man, what god hath prepared for them that loue hym. O blessed Paule, all this yet that thou hast sayde, is for none other purpose, but to prouoke me earnestly to loue, willing me by thy wordes, to thinke that thou canst none otherwyse declare of it, and so to giue my hart to pacience and hope of that thing, which neuer man yet coulde see or yet beleeue, although many thorow loue haue dyed.

Rom.8.

O excellent gift of fayth, wherof so much good commeth, that it causeth man to possesse the things which her can not comprehende! For faith ioyned with truth, bring-

geth

geth forth hope, whereby perfite charitie is engendred. And charitie is God, as witnesseth the Apostle, if we haue charitie, then haue we also God therewith, and then is God in vs, and we in him. And all this commeth of the benefite of fayth: for he dwelleth in all men, which haue true faith. Thus haue we a greater treasure than we can tell of, or yet any man expresse vnto vs. 1.Iohn.4. Iohn.4.

Nowe to conclude, sith that so great an Apostle as is S. Paule, will speake no further of God and his inestimable loue, I will according to hys ryghteous example. and doctrine, holde my peace and be still, following neuertheles hys teachinges. Notwythstanding, though

though herein I acknowledge my
selfe but earth and dust, yet may I
not fayle to yeeld thanks vnto my
eternall, and ryuing God, for his
great graces and benefites, as it
hath pleased him to giue me, vnto
that euerlasting king of Heauen,
immortall, inuisible, incompre-
hensible, mighty, and wyse,
euerye to him be all ho-
nor, prayse, glorye,
magnificence, and
loue, for euer
& euer. A-
men.

FINIS.